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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Pilgrim
FROM: Cicero
SUBJECT: Athens Morale Group and Albania

April 16, 1949

INTRODUCTORY

Early in this year some American officials in Athens, seeing the Greek situation deteriorating before their eyes, decided that active measures must be taken promptly to check the trend. Following a number of informal talks among themselves the agitation found expression in the setting up of a committee with George Edman as Chairman to work toward improving morale in Greece. While this was going on in Athens, other American officials in Washington were working at a higher level and with a different objective, but one, nonetheless, that depended for its success in part upon the success of the work of the Athens Committee. Until the receipt of your telegram of April 5, the activities of the two groups had not been completely coordinated.

In this paper I am giving you a reply to the points raised in your telegram of April 5, informing you first of the present status of the activities of the Athens Committee, which has been called by several names but which I shall call hereafter in this paper the "Special Morale Group". Next, I present a plan of action for the period between the arrival of your telegram of April 5 and the arrival, presumably in early June, of the man who will come to Greece to direct this activity. Finally, I bring up for consideration a suggestion for action in order to move forward with all groups on a common front toward the success in an Albanian operation.

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DATE 2007

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I THE SPECIAL MORALE GROUPA BACKGROUND

The Group began to work energetically, but more recently efforts have lagged. It appears that in the past two weeks and more, little or nothing has been done beyond the routine USIS and ECA information work. The reasons for this decline will be dealt with in a separate section.

The objectives of the Group according to an enclosure to the Embassy's Despatch No. 191 of March 10 were:

"To see that all Greeks are given full and fair information about their country's activities in (1) support of military campaign being waged against the bandits; (2) the steps being taken to promote and effect political, economic and social development; and (3) the assistance being extended to Greece by her allies, so that:

"Greeks as a whole will be encouraged to have the interest and incentive to bend every effort in support of (1) the military campaign, and (2) work wholeheartedly and with sustained enthusiasm, and hope for the fullest possible economic recovery of their country."

The machinery established to carry out these objectives is in the form of two Committees. The American Committee consists of the Director of USIS as Chairman, the ECA Information Officer, the Public Relations Officer of JUSMAPG, the Chief of Staff of JUSMAPG, and the Military Attache. It was intended that the American Committee should provide advice and inspiration and a good share of the initiative. The Greek Committee consists of representatives of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Commander-in-Chief, the Minister of Press, and the Director of the Greek Recovery Program. The Greek Committee was expected to bear the brunt of creation, production, and dissemination. It was also intended that the Committees were to function

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both separately and jointly, and in addition the individual members of the American Group were to work with their opposite numbers in the Greek Committee.

There is no record of the meetings held of the American Committee. It appears, however, that this Group met fairly frequently at the outset, subsequently rarely, and for perhaps the last three or four weeks not at all. So far as it is known, the Greek Committee never met separately and was present as a body only at the one joint meeting of the two Committees that was held on March 9. It is obvious therefore that whatever activities have been carried out in connection with the project have been largely the result of cooperation between the opposite numbers of the Greek and American Committees.

The concrete accomplishments may be summarized as participation in the National Rally known as "Work and Victory Week", and the preparation and distribution of four leaflets, three of which were for guerrilla consumption.

B REASONS FOR DECLINE IN ACTIVITIES

At the time the Committee was formed all concerned recognized the need as urgent. The military outlook was depressing. The morale of the Greek people, as well as that of the Army, was dangerously low. Subsequently there have been significant military successes. Army morale has also been boosted by increased pay and allowances. During March a large scale civilian effort in the form of a National Rally, organized and conducted largely outside the framework of the Group, was undertaken to bolster the morale of the Greek people. The results generally were considered successful.

Soon

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Soon after the military successes and the National Rally, the unity and prestige of the government were undermined by a recurrence of bitter partisan politics. Economic pressures, restrained during the period of national danger, re-emerged in the form of strikes and threats of strikes. These discouraging developments created an unfavorable atmosphere for efforts based upon an "up and up" program to stimulate Greek morale.

The work of the American Group has also suffered within the past month from the lack of a directing force. This had been provided by Mr. Edman originally, but was discontinued when the situation became unfavorable and particularly when the Department's disapproval of Mr. Edman's role became manifest. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that many consider morale operations as something to be undertaken when there is no possibility of more concrete accomplishments in the military or economic field.

The machinery created for the project is cumbersome. On the American side all those participating have other and pressing duties, as for each the Morale Group is a side-line. More fundamentally, the project has been understandably handicapped because of the diversity of its means and the wide scope of its possible activities. With a mandate to act in almost every field, there has been an increasing tendency to act in none. Emphasis was rightly recorded to the support of the military effort, but the surface has only been scratched.

II PLAN OF ACTION FOR IMMEDIATE FUTURE OF MORALE GROUP

A OVERT OR SEMI-OVERT ACTIVITIES

1) In directing the activities of the Group until the arrival of the person who is coming specially for this purpose, I propose to disregard the

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Committee's structure. It is too unwieldy to secure satisfactory results. I do not intend to abandon it formally and publicly, but simply to stop using it. I wish to avoid giving the impression of confusion that will come if I change in April what Edman set up in March, and my successor changes in June what I do in April.

2) To improve generally the Greek morale, I shall try to stimulate the Americans concerned to develop activity with their opposite numbers in the Greek Services, for example, Edman with the Ministry of Press, Clark of ECA with the Director of the Greek Recovery Program, and Colonel Phillips with the Greek General Staff.

3) I shall look to Edman to assume the leadership for public relations work, first because he has been doing it and we must avoid giving the impression that he has been dropped, and secondly because he is the best man on the spot to push ahead on such activities. Our immediate objectives in this field will be improved output, both qualitatively and quantitatively, with increased attention to rural areas. His visual and film programs for these areas are getting under way. Some special work must be done among the children and women as little has been done to date, and we need their support fully as much as that of the men folk. At the same time he will assist wherever possible the Greeks in building up a really effective external propaganda organization.

4) We are seeking a means to make the news broadcasts of Radio Athens correspond more nearly with our needs. We have been trying to influence these by conversations with the Greek authorities. We may seek to place our own man in Radio Athens, if a man can be found locally, paying a salary

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from funds available for this work, to help in the preparation of the script. If no satisfactory person can be found here, we may have to ask your help in finding and sending out to Greece such a person.

5) The agreement for Radio Salonika has been signed at long last. As it will be at least four months before this station is on the air, the problem of its effective operation is not pressing for a solution but, nonetheless, we are giving it active consideration. We have under our agreement a more effective control over this station than over Radio Athens, and so we will use it for pushing a Greek line of propaganda that is above Greek party politics. We must recognize that there are times that we will have to say things that the Greeks would not say, and others that they would prefer not to be said.

6) We shall continue to work on the Greek officials and writers to bring about a modification of the Greek official attitude towards Albanians. American Embassy officials in Athens have already made some progress in this during the past few weeks, but general progress has suffered a setback through the expression of some thoughtless remarks by Mr. Tsaldaris to British newspapermen.

7) To carry on this work, I believe that ultimately one person should devote his full time to its direction. He should have assisting him a full-time stenographer. There should be, as I mentioned, at the present time a full-time employee at Radio Athens working upon script. It is entirely possible that as the work develops there will be a need for media specialists—a term which I consider to mean persons with radio and writing experience. This is all the personnel that is needed at the present, although the person
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directing this work will of course have to call (1) upon JUSMAPG constantly for cooperation, (2) upon Edman for public relations work, and (3) upon the Embassy for part-time assistance from several officers there.

8) It is my conception that this project must not become another large and special unit with numerous personnel. What are principally needed are brains, the time to use them, energy and initiative. For the most part I hope to find these among Americans already in Greece.

B COVERT ACTIVITIES

1) Through the cooperation of JUSMAPG, an officer is being assigned to the 8TH Division of the Greek National Army, with headquarters in Ioannina, to tap the information secured from within Albania by the Division's Shepherds Network. (See III B d of my memo of March 21.) This officer will become our instrument for utilizing this network for our own purposes, and for sending our own agents, when and if desired, into Albania through this network.

2) The efficacy of leaflets dropped behind the guerrilla lines has not been proven but they will continue to be used when the occasion permits with the hope that they may have a cumulative impact upon guerrilla morale. As the Greek National Army is able to advance northward and concentrate on the border guerrilla pockets and we feel the time is opportune, we may use surrender leaflets.

3) JUSMAPG is looking into the problem of the effective use of loudspeakers for frontline propaganda work. At the present time there are twelve such loudspeakers in Greece, one being assigned to each division. As a result of this system of distribution, the loudspeakers are not being effectively

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effectively employed. Consideration is being given to setting up one or more mobile units that will operate all the loudspeakers.

4) Consideration is being given to the printing of a small American-controlled newspaper on a regular basis for delivery by airplane behind the bandit lines. It is a well-known fact that the Greeks, whether Royalists or Communists, are great newspaper readers. The bandits have no newspaper and if we can supply one to them, it will give us the same advantage in this field that we have in the military field with the Greek Air Force: the National Army having one and the bandits having none.

5) I have asked Horatio to develop contacts among officials of the North Epirus society for the purpose of ascertaining how much this society can be of use to us. I have also asked him to give some attention to those Albanians still in Greece in DP Camps. For his reasonable money needs in this work, he will draw from the operation part of the \$20,000 fund available for this work. (See Department's Telegrams No. 129 of January 31 and 309 of March 6.)

6) At the present time I have two persons who are acting as agents on a short-term basis. One has just completed a round-trip to Tirana. Their usefulness until now has been for checking stories of information about present conditions, particularly military, in Albania.

7) For the work as contemplated above, I estimate that the present sum of money available is adequate until the end of this fiscal year. At the moment of writing only \$2,000, for the printing of pamphlets, has been used of the \$20,000 available. If we plan to move into really active operations, you must be prepared to receive requests for considerably more financial support.

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support. In view of your past experience and present position, you are really better able than I to estimate what size these requests will take. Certainly the sums will be considerable. As an indication of the amounts used to influence groups in Greece, I mention that at a secret session yesterday in hearings in the Markezinis affair, Mr. Katsambas is reported to have informed the Prosecutor that within a relatively short time after having given 300 gold sovereigns to Mr. Markezinis, he gave 1,000 gold sovereigns to Mr. Tsaldaris, 600 gold sovereigns to Mr. Venizelos, and 300 gold sovereigns to Mr. Gonatas, all leaders of Greek political parties.

III SUGGESTION FOR ACTION IN ALBANIAN OPERATION

The foregoing activities are contemplated in order to improve and maintain at a higher level the Greek morale in the campaign against the bandits. Only secondarily do they bear upon the larger aspects of America's fight against Soviet imperialism. To strike a blow against this in Albania, it is necessary to plan and execute a more elaborate program.

It seems to me the first step in this is to bring about a semblance of unity among Albanians abroad. When this is accomplished and an Albanian Committee formed, the Committee could serve as a front for an American-inspired Albanian newspaper and perhaps for a clandestine radio which could be used for propaganda against the Greek guerrillas as well as against the Hoxha regime in Albania. More important we may wish to baptize this refugee committee as a "Government-in-Exile" in order to give a backing of legality to the sending of an expeditionary force into Albania. Our military people believe that if a small force, a brigade at the most, were able to operate

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inside Albania many of the difficulties along the border for the Greek National Army would be eliminated. I was told, for example, that if 600 men could make an excursion in Albania around the Vitsi pocket, which is now holding down two Greek divisions, the pocket could be quickly eliminated. Now that Yugoslavia has placed two divisions near the Greek frontier, presumably to prevent a guerrilla movement from operating from Greece into Yugoslavia, we may be able to end quickly, if we have an Albanian brigade, this phase of the Greek war while at the same time, strengthening Tito and recreating a friendly Albania. But we have not much time to lose. The target date for the Greek National Army to be in force on the northern frontiers is July one. As the Soviets are constantly reinforcing Albania, we should act as soon after July one as is possible.

Inasmuch as Greece has placed her official hopes for security in the United Nations, I believe that the Greek Government, irrespective of the temptation, will not authorize its troops to cross the Albanian frontier. We must, therefore, consider the use of Albanian troops. In order to use such troops, one should have a government to which they are responsible. Therefore, I suggest that you give immediate and serious consideration, first, to the problem of securing a united front among the Albanian refugees, and secondly, to the formation of an Albanian expeditionary force.